

born in two successive intermediate states before they are able to overcome the subtlest innate afflictive obstructions. This means that they will be born, for instance, in the intermediate state of the first of the seventeen sub-levels of the Form Realm, the Brahma Type Level, but are unable to become foe-destroyers during that state. Thereafter, they bypass rebirth as celestial beings of the Brahma Type Level, and are born in the intermediate state of the second of the seventeen sub-levels of the Form Realm, the Reciting in Front of Brahma Level, during which they attain self-liberation.

Panchen Sonam Drakpa even says that he thinks it is possible that some *non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the intermediate state* are gradually born in all sixteen intermediate states of the sixteen sub-levels of the Form Realm - with the exception of the intermediate state of the Great Brahma Level - and become foe-destroyers during the last of those sixteen intermediate states.

II) *Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state*

Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state (*gzugs su nyer 'gro phyir mi 'ong skyes 'da' ba*) are non-returns of the Desire Realm who in this life newly attained the path of seeing and the result of non-returner.

Then after their death, they will proceed first to the intermediate state and thereafter to the birth state of one of the four levels of the Form Realm, during which they attain the result of foe-destroyer.

Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state can be classified into three types:

- a) Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) shortly after rebirth
- b) Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state with a compositional factor
- c) Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state without a compositional factor

a) *Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) shortly after rebirth*

Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) shortly after rebirth (*gzugs su nyer 'gro phyir mi 'ong skyes tsam nas 'da' ba*) are non-returns of the Desire Realm who in this life newly attained the path of seeing and the result of non-returner. Then after their death, they will proceed to the intermediate state and the birth state of one of the four levels of the Form Realm. Shortly after they have reached the birth state they will attain the result of foe-destroyer.

b) *Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state with a compositional factor*

Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state with a compositional factor (*gzugs su nyer 'gro phyir mi 'ong skyes 'da' ba 'du byed dang bcas te 'da' ba*) are non-returns of the Desire Realm who in this life newly attained the path of seeing and the result of non-returner. Then after their death, they will proceed to the intermediate state and the birth state of one of the four levels of the Form Realm during which they will attain the result of foe-destroyer by applying great effort.

Of the five aggregates, effort is a compositional factor, which is the reason for describing this non-returner as one who goes beyond with a 'compositional factor'.

c) *Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state without a compositional factor*

Non-returns who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond (i.e. attain self-liberation) in the birth state without a compositional factor (*gzugs su nyer 'gro phyir mi 'ong skyes 'da' ba 'du byed dang bcas med par 'da' ba*) are non-returns of the Desire Realm who in this life newly attained the path of seeing and the result of non-returner. Then after their death, they will proceed to the intermediate state and the birth state of one of the four levels of the Form Realm. Even though they will not attain

the result of foe-destroyer shortly after they have reached the birth state they will attain it during that state without applying great effort.

According to Lama Tsongkhapa's **Golden Rosary**, unlike (b) *non-returners who will go beyond in the birth state with a compositional factor*, (c) *non-returners who will go beyond in the birth state without a compositional factor* have lesser afflictions, and path consciousnesses arise spontaneously in their continua. Thus, they do not have to apply great effort.

According to Lama Tsongkhapa's **Stairway to Clear Awareness**, the difference between (a) *non-returners who will go beyond shortly after rebirth* and (c) *non-returners who will go beyond in the birth state without a compositional factor* is that (a) *non-returners who will go beyond shortly after rebirth* have even lesser afflictions, and the arising of path consciousnesses in their continua is even more spontaneous than of (c) *non-returners who will go beyond in the birth state without a compositional factor*. This accounts for their ability to attain self-liberation shortly after reaching the birth state.

Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state may be born in any of the sixteen birth states of the sub-levels of the Form Realm - with the exception of the birth state of the Great Brahma Level - and become foe-destroyers in that state. Therefore, *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state* of the fifth Pure Abode (the Not Low Level) must have attained the five *alternating meditative concentrations*.

Furthermore, *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state* will attain the result of foe-destroyer in the birth state of one of the sixteen sub-levels of the Form Realm (with the exception of the birth state of the Great Brahma Level).

Yet, this does not mean that after their death as Desire Realm beings (who newly attained the path of seeing) they will be born in only *one* birth state of the sixteen sub-levels of the Form Realm and attain the result of foe-destroyer in that state. Although they have the 'potential' to be born in only one birth state (during which they attain self-liberation), according to Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **Decisive Analysis**, some *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state* may be reborn two or three times - possibly even sixteen times in the sixteen sub-levels of the Form Realm - before they attain the result of foe-destroyer in the birth state of one of those levels.

For instance, some non-returners may be born in the intermediate state and thereafter the birth state of the first of the seventeen sub-levels of the Form Realm, the Brahma Type Level. But since they are unable to attain the result of foe-destroyer during the latter state, they proceed through the preceding state and the death state of that life. Subsequently they are born in the intermediate state and then the birth state of the second level of the seventeen sub-levels of the Form Realm, the Reciting in Front of Brahma Level, during which they are able to eliminate the subtlest afflictive obstructions and achieve self-liberation.

Please note that the presentation of (II) *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state* should actually be followed by the presentation of (III) *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond with a compositional factor* and (IV) *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond without a compositional factor* (see Handout 45, page 1). However, Lama Tsongkhapa, Gyalsab je and Panchen Sonam Drakpa's commentaries merely list them without providing any descriptions. Nonetheless the meaning of these two types of non-returners becomes clear when understanding (the above presented): b) *non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state with a compositional factor* and c) *non- returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state without a compositional factor*.

I) Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and progress to a higher [level]

Non returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and progress to a higher [level] (*gzugs su nyer 'gro phyir mi 'ong gong 'pho ba*) are non-returners of the Desire Realm who in this life newly attained the path of seeing and the result of non-returner.

Then after their death, they will proceed to rebirth in the Form Realm and eventually attain the result of foe-destroyer either on the highest sub-level of the Form Realm, the Not Low Level, or on the highest level of the Formless Realm, the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level.

Hence, they are called 'non returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and progress to a higher [level]' because usually they are unable to attain the result of foe-destroyer during their first rebirth

